

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 6

Title: Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Interim Progress Report for 2012/13

Author: Gill Millward/ Claire O'Reilly, Countryside Access
Improvement Officer, Derbyshire County Council

Purpose of Report

To present Forum members with an update on progress towards delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) in 2012/13.

Progress to December 2012

Below is a summary of the main work in progress in relation to the five RoWIP aims:-

Aim 1 - Existing Network

- Aim 1a): work is continuing with the **ease of use surveys**. May's sample survey resulted in a 71% pass rate (which was slightly below the 72.5% end of year target). All aspects affecting ease of use produced good pass rates. Although there was a very slight reduction for signposting, bridges, surface condition and the reinstatement of paths after ploughing and cropping compared with the same time last year, other areas of work such as waymarking, condition of stiles, gates etc and the removal of obstructions have improved. The lower pass rate is mainly due to some longer paths failing. The results from the second half of the survey, carried out in November 2012 are not yet available.
- Aim 1a) ii: There were 298 **roadside signposts** known to be missing on 1 April 2012. Although a signposting contract will not be issued this year, Countryside area teams are dealing with a further 40 requests.
- Aim 1a): **Surface improvements** - work is being carried out to a number of public rights of way and trails across the county. Some of the key projects are listed under Aim 3.
- Aim 1e): **Capital funding** - £535,000 of Local Transport Plan funds have been allocated to be spent directly on public rights of way or RoWIP projects in 2012/13.
- Aim 1e): **External funding** - a formal offer of £247,000 has been made by Natural England to construct the section of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail between Monks Road, near Charlesworth and High Lane in Simmondley. We have also been awarded more than £900,000 over

5 years through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to develop a direct cycling link into Chesterfield Station from the Town Centre.

Aim 2 - Definitive Map and Statement

- Aim 2b): **Digital Mapping** - public rights of way in all areas of Derbyshire can now be viewed electronically through the County Council's website at <http://derbyshiremaps.derbyshire.gov.uk>
- Aim 2c) i & ii: in terms of dealing with the **backlog of legal orders**, 25 cases have been reported to committee, 28 progressed to order making stage, 25 orders have been confirmed and brought into effect and 5 referred to the Secretary of State for determination.

Aim 3 - Connected, safe and accessible network

- Aim 3a) iii: **Pennine Bridleway** - a landowner has signed a creation agreement for a 400 metre section of the route between High Lane and Green Lane in Glossop. A contract has been let for the Monks Road to High Lane section and work has started on site.
- Aim 3a) v: **Midshires Way** - the Hopwell to Dale section (3.3km) is now complete and will be formally opened shortly. Long Horse Bridge is in place on site although there is still some outstanding legal work which has delayed the formal opening.
- Aim 3b) v: An **Open Access** Sub Group of the DADLAF is looking at what improvements can be carried out to the open access land within its area.
- Aim 3c ii) & 3d) iii: **Surface improvements** are being carried out to a series of paths and trails including sections of the Five Pits and High Peak Trails and the Cromford and Chesterfield Canal Towpaths; Denby Footpath 74 has been opened up with help from Denby Footpath Group to improve a local historical link to Openwoodgate.
- Aim 3e): 7 km of **new Greenways** have been added to the strategic cycle/greenway network since April, including a new route at Eckington linking two local schools, a section of the Sustrans National Cycle Network 63 through Swadlincote to the Conkers Circuit and the Hopwell to Dale section of the Midshires Way. The target for the year is 15km, including delivering schemes to extend the Hipper Valley Greenway in Chesterfield and provide a Greenway link to Castlefields School in Old Bolsover.
- Aim 3e): A report was submitted to the June Cabinet meeting seeking approval for the County Council to explore, with partners, ways of delivering the **White Peak Cycle Loop** in general and the Matlock to Buxton section in particular. The one section that had funding allocated, to deliver a link between Matlock and Oker has been held up due to planning difficulties.

- Aim 3f): **Motor vehicles in the countryside** - following approval of the new Policy for the Management of Green Lanes by Cabinet in July, we have been working towards delivery of the Green Lanes Action Plan for 2012/13, starting with Long Causeway.
- Aim 3 General: we have been working with several partnership schemes to look for opportunities to make improvements to the access network including: DerwentWISE project bidding for Heritage Lottery Fund money to delivery landscape improvements along the Derwent Valley between Matlock Bath and Derby; the Eastern Moors Partnership and the Sheffield Moors Partnership project.

Aim 4 - Promotion and Publicity

- Aim 4b): **Easy access** - an additional five Trampler mobility scooters have been purchased, bringing the total available to hire to ten. Trampers can now be hired at Tapton Lock, Middleton Top, High Peak Junction, Elvaston Castle, Shipley Country Park and Creswell Crags. This scheme is proving to be extremely popular. Our web pages have been improved to provide more information about easy access opportunities in the County.
http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/access_for_all
- Aim 4c) iv: we have been contributing through the **Active Derbyshire** Partnership to the revision of the Active Derbyshire Plan which is hoped will in turn contribute to the Healthy Lifestyles priority within the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Derbyshire 2012-2015.
- Aim 4d) iii & 4e): we have produced a new leaflet - **Access Derbyshire** which provides information about how accessible the county is. It complements the Cycle Derbyshire and Horse Ride Derbyshire leaflets both of which have had another revision and reprint due to their popularity.
- Aim 4d): **Promoted routes** - we are still working on improving the route of the Archaeological Way in Bolsover and have also been supporting the National Forest in their project to deliver a new regional walking route.
- Aim 4e) i: **Promotion** - the Countryside Service has had a presence at several large shows and events this year with the aim of reaching significant numbers of people to promote Derbyshire's countryside and the access network. These have included the Food and Drink Fair at Bolsover, Ashover Show, Chatsworth Country Fair and the Woodland Festival at Elvaston Castle.

Aim 5 - Community Involvement in local rights of way

- Aim 5a): **Working with Local Councils** - we have continued to progress work directly with Parish Councils in association with the County Council's Ranger Service and with Groundwork Trusts. 125

volunteer days were generated by Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire in the first 6 months of the year through a Service Level Agreement involving work in the parishes of Bonsall, Chapel en le Frith, Chinley, Hayfield and Whaley Bridge.

- Aim 5b): **Working with Volunteers and Local Groups** - as in previous years we are continuing to generate a considerable amount of volunteer input to PRow and access work across the county. We have been working actively with local Ramblers Association groups in Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire and with local Footpath groups in Denby, Findern and Melbourne as well as with our own volunteer groups attached to the Countryside Service.
- A new post of **Volunteer Project Officer** has been created within the Countryside Service as the result of a recent re-organisation. Although the post will be responsible for co-ordinating volunteer work across the whole of the Countryside Service, it is being located within the Access Team due to the emphasis on access project work. We have also appointed a temporary **Waterways Project Officer** to work on projects and with groups on the Cromford and Chesterfield Canals.

Recommendation

That Members of the Forum note the interim progress report for delivering Derbyshire's RoWIP in 2012/13.